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LETTERS

TO

The Right Reverend Author of *A plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the LORD's SUPPER.*

Containing a plain ACCOUNT of the

SACRAMENT of BAPTISM.

IN WHICH

All the TEXTS of the *New Testament*, relating to it, are produced, and the whole DOCTRINE about it drawn from them alone.

PART I.

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SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

IN WHICH

ALL THE TEXTS OF THE MASS OF BAPTISM, EXCLUDING THOSE OF THE BLESSING, AND OF THE MASS OF BAPTISM,
SPOONS OF CHURCHES, FIFTEEN PAGES LONG.

— T H A T —

1070

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LETTER I.

My LORD,

WHEN I read your Lordship's plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, many years ago, I could not help wishing to see an account of the other Sacrament drawn up in the same manner. You have certainly laid the true foundation of our enquiries into the *positive institutions* of Christianity. You draw your account of a *Christian* rite from the *Christian* records; and your assertion is undoubtedly true: "that all *positive duties*, or "duties made such by institution alone, de- "pend entirely upon the will and declaration "of the person who institutes or ordains them, "with respect to the real *design* and *end* of "them; and, consequently, to the due "manner of performing them." Since no one has yet executed what has been so long wished for, I shall make an humble attempt to follow your Lordship's example with respect to the sacrament of *baptism*. I shall

lay together all the texts in the *New Testament* relating to it, and from them alone draw the whole doctrine about it. And I reckon it is with great propriety that I address my enquiries on this subject to your Lordship, because if I find the truth, I am indebted to you for pointing out the shortest and plainest way to it.

I beg leave to begin with some of your propositions, making the necessary alteration from the one sacrament to the other.

I. The receiving of *baptism* is not a duty of itself; or a duty apparent to us from the nature of things; but a duty made such to *Christians*, by the positive institution of *Jesus Christ*.

II. All *positive duties*, or duties made such by *institution* alone, depend entirely upon the will and declaration of the person who institutes or ordains them, with respect to the real *design* and *end* of them; and, consequently, to the due *manner* of performing them.

III. It is plain, therefore, that the *nature*, the *design*, and the due *manner* of receiving *baptism*, must of necessity depend upon what *Jesus Christ*, who instituted it, hath declared about it.

IV. It cannot be doubted that he himself sufficiently declared to his first and immediate followers, the whole of what he designed should be understood by it, or implied in it.

V. It

V. It is of small importance, therefore, to *Christians*, to know what the many writers upon this subject, since the time of the Evangelists and Apostles, have affirmed; much less can it be the duty of *Christians* to be guided by what any persons, by their own authority, or from their own imaginations, may teach concerning this duty.

VI. The passages in the *New Testament*, which relate to this duty, and they alone, are the original accounts of the *nature* and *end* of this institution, and the only authentic declarations, upon which we of later ages can safely depend, being written by the immediate followers of our Lord; those who were witnesses themselves of the *institution*, or were instructed by those who were so, and join with them in delivering down one and the same account of this religious duty.

Your Lordship will permit me to mention an observation of yours, most worthy to be remembered, under this last proposition, *viz.*

“ A very few years make a great alteration
 “ in mens notions, and language about such
 “ points of religion. And the distance of
 “ many years makes a still greater alteration;
 “ whilst men of various opinions, and strong
 “ imaginations, are continually going on to
 “ comment and enlarge upon such subjects,
 “ the *New Testament* therefore, in this case,
 “ is alone to be depended on: from which we
 “ ought

" ought, with the greatest care and honesty,
" to take *all* our notions of this duty."

Your Lordship will be pleased with the following observation of Archbishop *Tillotson*, much to the same purpose. "In process of time,
" the best institutions are apt to *decline*, and
" by insensible degrees to swerve, and depart
" from the perfection of their first state; and
" therefore it is a good rule, to preserve things
" from corruption and degeneracy, often to
" look back to *the first institution*, and by
" that to correct those imperfections and er-
" rors which will almost unavoidably creep
" in with time." Vol. 2. page 170, edit. fol.

I shall now offer to your Lordship's perusal every text of the *New Testament*, that speaks of the sacrament of *Baptism*. It will be proper first to set down those which belong to *John's baptism*.

Passages of Scripture concerning JOHN's baptism.

1. *Mat. iii. 5, 6, 7.* Then went out to him *Jerusalem* and all *Judea*, and all the region round about *Jordan*, and were *baptised* of him in *Jordan*, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces* come to his *baptism*, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, &c.

2. Verse 11. I indeed *baptize* you with water unto repentance, &c.

3. Verse

3. Verse 13, 14, 15, 16. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water.

4. Mat. xxi. 25, 26, 27. The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, if we shall say from heaven, he will say unto us, why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say of men, we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, we cannot tell, &c.

5. Mark i. 4, 5. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan confessing their sins.

6.—Ver. 8, 9, 10. I indeed have baptized you with water.—And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water, &c.

7. *Mark xi. 30.* The baptism of *John*, was it from heaven, or of men?

8. *Luke iii. 3.* And he came into all the country about *Jordan*, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

9.—*Ver. 7, 8.* Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers—bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

10.—*Ver. 12.* Then came also Publicans to be baptized.

11.—*Ver. 16.* I indeed baptize you with water.

12.—*Ver. 21.* Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, &c.

13. *Luke vii. 29, 30.* And all the people that heard him, and the Publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of *John*. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

14. *Luke xx. 4.* The baptism of *John*, was it from heaven or of men?

15. *John i. 25, 26.* Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? *John* answered them saying, I baptize with water.

16.—*Ver. 28.* Beyond *Jordan* where *John* was baptizing.

17.—*Ver. 31.* That he should be made manifest

manifest to *Israel*: therefore am I come *baptizing* with water.

18.—Ver. 33. He that sent me to *baptize* with water.

19. *John* iii. 23. And *John* also was *baptizing* in *Enon*, near to *Salim*, because there was much water there; and they came and were *baptized*. Note, some understand

[Verse 25. of *baptism*, then there arose a question—about *purifying*.]

20. *John* iv. 1. The pharisees had heard that *Jesus* made and *baptized* more disciples than *John*.

21. *John* x. 40. Beyond *Jordan*, into the place where *John* at first *baptized*.

22. *Acts* i. 5. *John* truly *baptized* with water.

23.—Ver. 22. Beginning from the *baptism* of *John*.

24. *Acts* x. 37. After the *baptism* which *John* preached.

25.—xi. 16. *John* indeed *baptized* with water.

26.—xiii. 24. When *John* had first preached before his coming the *baptism* of repentance to all the people.

27.—xviii. 25. He [*Apollos*] spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the *baptism* of *John*.

28.—xix. 3, 4. Unto what then were ye *baptized*? And they said unto *John's baptism*. Then said *Paul*, *John* verily *baptized*

B with

with the *baptism* of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on *Christ Jesus*.

Passages of scripture concerning CHRIST's Baptism.

1. *Mat. xxviii. 19.* Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

2. *Mark xvi. 15, 16.* And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ; he that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved.

3. *John iii. 5.* Except a man be *born of water* and of the spirit, &c.

4.—*Ver. 22.* After these things came *Jesus* and his disciples into the land of *Judea* ; and there he tarried with them and *baptized*.

5.—*Ver. 26.* Behold the same *baptizeth*, and all men come to him.

6. — *iv. 1, 2.* When therefore the Lord knew how the pharisees had heard, that *Jesus* made and *baptized* more disciples than *John* (though *Jesus* himself *baptized* not, but his disciples.)

7. *Acts ii. 38.* Then *Peter* said unto them, Repent, and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of *Jesus Christ*, for the remission of sins,

fins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

8. *Acts ii. 41.* Then they that gladly received his word were *baptized*.

9. — viii. 12, 13. But when they believed *Philip*, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of *Jesus Christ*, they were *baptized*, both men and women. Then *Simon* himself believed also; and when he was *baptized*, &c.

10.—Ver. 16. Only they were *baptized* in the name of the Lord *Jesus*.

11.—Ver. 36, 37, 38, 39. And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water. And the Eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be *baptized*? And *Philip* said, if thou believest with all thine heart thou may'st. And he answered and said, I believe that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still. And they went down both into the water, both *Philip* and the Eunuch, and he *baptized* him. And when they were come up out of the water, &c.

12. — ix. 18. And [Saul] arose and was *baptized*.

13. — x. 47, 48. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be *baptized*, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord.

14. *Acts* xvi. 15. And when she [*Lydia*] was *baptized* and her household.

15. — Ver. 33. And was *baptized*, he [the jaylor] and all his straightway.

16. — xviii. 8. And many of the *Corinthians* hearing, believed, and were *baptized*.

17. — xix. 5. When they heard this, they [who had before been *baptized* into *John's baptism*] were *baptized* in the name of the Lord *Jesus*.

18. — xxii. 16. And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be *baptized*, and *wash away* thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

19. *Romans* vi. 3, 4. Know ye not, that so many of us as were *baptized* into *Christ Jesus*, were *baptized* into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by *baptism* into death, that like as *Christ* was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life.

20. *1 Corinthians* i. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Were ye *baptized* in the name of *Paul*? I thank God that I *baptized* none of you, but *Crispus* and *Gaius*: lest any should say, that I had *baptized* in mine own name. And I *baptized* also the household of *Stephanas*: besides, I know not whether I *baptized* any other; for *Christ* sent me not to *baptize*, but to preach the gospel.

21. *1 Cor.* vi. 11. But ye are *washed*.

22. *Ibid.* xii. 13. For by one spirit are we all *baptized* into one body. [Note, this may rather

rather be understood of the baptism of the *Holy Ghost.*]

23. *1 Cor.* xv. 29. Else what shall they do, that are *baptized* for the dead. [That is, I think, by baptism come *into the place* of those Christians who are dead, who are their *successors* in their profession, and in their sufferings.]

24. *Gal.* iii. 27. For as many of you as have been *baptized* into *Christ*, have put on *Christ*.

25. *Ephes.* iv. 5. One *baptism*.

26. *Ibid.* v. 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the *washing* of water, by the word.

27. *Coloss.* ii. 12. Buried with him in *baptism*, wherein also you are risen with him.

28. *Tit.* iii. 5. According to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the *Holy Ghost*.

29. *Hebrews* vi. 2. The doctrine of *baptisms*. [Note, it is not certain, this has any reference to Christian baptism. See *Peirce in loc.*] .

30. — x. 22. Our bodies *washed* with pure water.

31. *1 Peter* iii. 21. The like figure whereunto, even *baptism*, doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection, &c.

Besides the foregoing, there are these following texts, which some good expositors understand of *baptism*.

2. *Peter* i. 9. And hath forgotten, that he
was

was purged from his old sins. *Hebrews vi. 4.*
 Those who were once enlightened. *Heb. x. 32.*
 In which after ye were illuminated.

These are, I believe, all the texts in the *New Testament*, that relate either to the baptism of John or of Christ.

The observations I have to offer from them, shall be reserved to some following letters.

*I am, my Lord,
 Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant.*

L E T T E R II.

My Lord,

THERE are some opinions in Theology so entirely speculative, that a man, who has a just value for time, would scarce think himself justified in spending a day to examine which are right, and which wrong. The subject before us is *not* of this sort: it is entirely of a practical nature, and comes into practice daily. It therefore becomes us to look well to our rule, to what our Saviour and his immediate followers have declared about this duty; "because (as your Lordship well observes) we can have no other direction in this sort of duties, unless we will have recourse to mere invention, which makes them our own institutions, and not the institutions of those who first appointed them." *Plain Ac.p. 3.*

In the foregoing letter, it appears, there are about threescore texts of scripture, which speak of the institution of baptism; partly as practised

tised by *John*, and partly by the Apostles and Disciples of *Jesus Christ*: Passages abundantly sufficient to inform us of the *nature, design, and manner* of this sacrament.

I beg leave first to lay before your Lordship an enquiry into the *manner* of this rite, or what the *New Testament* means by the action of *baptizing*.

The writers of the *New Testament* make use of two words, $\beta\epsilon\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$ and $\lambda\gamma\omega$, which lead us to the precise meaning of baptism, the latter of which is almost the constant word of the Septuagint in those *very numerous* places where *bathing*, or washing the *whole body* is commanded, in contradistinction to every other practice of washing the hands, or feet, or sprinkling or washing of cloaths. $\Lambda\gamma\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\; \upsilon\delta\alpha\tau\iota$ occurs no less than eleven times in one chapter, where bathing the body is appointed on sundry occasions, as a *distinct rite* from washing the hands, or garments, &c.

The Evangelists and Apostles did, as Dr. *Prideaux*, the most learned *Joseph Mede*, and others observe, all quote from the *Greek* of the *Old Testament*. *Prid. Connect.* vol. II. page 47, edit. 3. *Mede's Works*, p. 625. Since therefore $\lambda\gamma\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\; \upsilon\delta\alpha\tau\iota$, used times without number in the *Old Testament*, never imports less than *bathing*, or washing the *whole body*; it follows, *baptism* means the same, when it is expressed by *our body washed with pure water*. [Gr. $\lambda\epsilon\lambda\gamma\mu\epsilon\nu\omega\tau\iota\;\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\iota\; \upsilon\delta\alpha\tau\iota$] *Heb. x. 22.*

We have a remarkable passage in the case of
Naaman

Naaman the Syrian's cure of a leprosy. Elisha commands him to go and *wash* [λουσαι] in *Jordan* seven times. The very practice appointed for cleansing a leper, and which, without controversy, means *washing the whole body*, in distinction from *all other rites of sprinkling, pouring, &c.* What is done by the leper in consequence of this command? He went down and *dipped* himself [εβαπτισατο] seven times in *Jordan*, according to the saying of the man of God? 2 Kings v. 14. What was the saying of the man of God? *Wash* [bathe] *seven times*. He did as he was commanded, *viz.* he *dipped* himself seven times. The strict translation of the *Hebrew* word [טברּ;] and so rendered in every place, without one exception, where the word occurs in the *Old Testament*. From which word the *Jews* call *John the Baptist* טברן *the dipper*. Grot. in Mat. xiv. 2.

It falls out, my Lord, very remarkably, that the *only two words* which the *Greek* of the *Old Testament* makes use of to express the rite of *washing the whole body*, as distinct from *all other rites of sprinkling, pouring, washing the hands and feet*; both these words, and *only these*, are made use of in the *Greek* of the *New Testament*, to *specify and determine*, with *precision*, the action of *baptizing*. So that if the *Evangelists and Apostles* had, on purpose, sought words which should *precisely express a bathing the whole body*, and *prevent all inquiry whether they meant nothing short of it*;

they could not possibly have met with two fitter words than λεπτόν* and βαπτίζω. *Baptizō* would hardly have done so well, because, borrowing their *Greek* from the *Old Testament*. This last word is never used there to express the rite of washing or dipping a person's whole body. Let any learned person try to find out two better words, if he had a mind to express *a washing of the whole body*. The question is not, whether *sprinkling* was a ceremony of purification. No one doubts it: but whether *sprinkling* is the rite of *baptism*? Whoever is acquainted with the *Greek* of the *Old Testament*, whence, as has been observed, the Evangelists and Apostles took their language, may perceive that *sprinkling* and *baptism* are as *distinct* rites, as are the actions of *baptism*; and the priest's putting *oil* upon the tip of the right ear, and the thumb of the right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot. Both which ceremonies of *baptism*, and such application of *oil*, were used in cleansing a leper. *Lev.* xiv.

And here your Lordship will permit me to observe, we run into a *great mistake* and *confusion* of language, when we talk of *sprinkling* and *immersion* as different *modes* of the *same thing*. *Modern custom* has reconciled us to this abuse of language; so that we do not stumble at the inconsistency, when we call *sprinkling*

anointing, *unction*, *unctioning*, &c.

* The *New Testament* has also its compound απολεψις, *Acts* xxiii. 16. *1. Cor.* vi. 11.

baptism. But he that shall confine himself unto the ideas conveyed by scripture language, will perceive that to call sprinkling a mode of baptism, is to call sprinkling a mode of bathing or of washing the body in water. 'Tis to confound two rites entirely as distinct, as were washing the body, and shaving off the hair, in the purification of a leper. Accordingly the Christian church, the whole Christian church, for thirteen hundred years successively from the time of the Apostles, understood by baptism immersion, and so practised; aspersio being only permitted upon extraordinary occasions. *Vid. Whiby's note on Romans vi. 4.*

Your Lordship [Plain Account, page 150.] observing, at least quoting Dr. Clarke as observing, that Baptism is stiled a being buried with Christ, and rising with him again, remarks, " this latter expression made use of by St. Paul, with relation to baptism, is taken from the custom of immersion in the first days, and from that particular manner of baptizing proselytes, by which they were first covered with water, and in a state as it were of death and inactivity, and then arose out of it into a sort of new state of life and action. And if baptism had been then performed, as it is now amongst us, we should never have so much as heard of this form of expression, of dying and arising again, in this rite."

By this your Lordship authorizes me to say, that

that in the *first days* Baptism was not performed as it is now amongst us. No, my Lord, it is now amongst us changed into *another thing*: not into a *different mode* of the *same rite*; but into *another and different rite*. The *first days* say, that *baptism* was *immersion*. “ And what-
“ ever was truly necessary at first towards a
“ right understanding of this *institution*, was
“ without doubt contained in the *first and ear-*
“ *liest accounts*; otherwise it must be said,
“ that the *very first* Christians, who were
“ called upon to perform this duty, and who
“ actually did perform it *very frequently*, were
“ not fully instructed by the Apostles in it.”

Plain Account, page 7.

According to the *first and earliest accounts*, that is, according to “ the *only authentic de-*
“ *clarations*, upon which we of latter ages can
“ *safely depend*.” [*Plain Account*, page 7.] When an *Apostle*, or other fit person said, I *baptize thee in the name of the Father, &c.* He meant, I *immerse, plunge, dip thee in the name, &c.* This your Lordship knows was the custom in the *first days*: so that when our Lord and Saviour sent forth the Apostles with this commission, Go teach all nations, *bap-*
tizing them: He meant *immerse them*. And so the *Apostles* actually understood him, for so they *practised*. And “ if Baptism had been
“ then performed as it is now amongst us, we
“ should never have so much as heard of this
“ form of expression, of *dying and arising again*

" in this rite." But " the distance of many years has made a great alteration in mens language about *this* point," joining together in one word [baptize] two several distinct rites, which the Almighty has always put asunder. And from whom came the established change of the scriptural baptism into another quite different institution? Let the learned Dr. Wall answer, " it is a rule that does not fail in any particular that I know of, *viz.* All the nations that do now, or formerly did, submit to the authority of the *bishop of Rome*, do ordinarily baptize their infants by *pouring* or *sprinkling*.

" But all other Christians in the world, who never owned the *Pope's* usurped power, do, and ever did, *dip* their infants in the ordinary use. And if we take the division of the world from the three main parts of it, all the Christians in *Asia*, all in *Africa*, and about one third part of *Europe*, are of the last sort, [*viz.* who understand by baptism *immersion*, and so practise.] In which third part of *Europe* are comprehended the Christians of *Græcia*, *Thracia*, *Servia*, *Bulgaria*, *Walachia*, *Moldavia*, *Russia*, &c. and even the *Muscovites*, who, if coldness of the country will excuse, might plead for a dispensation with the most reason of any." *Hist. Inf. Baptism*, part 2. page 309, &c. edit. 1.

See here, my Lord, how the *immersion* of the *first days* came to be cast out, and set aside.

The

The church of Rome, the mother of abominations, who thinketh to change times and laws, Rev. xvii. Dan. vii. She first set aside the common use of dipping ; and her example is followed by those protestant churches that were once under her tyranny and corruption ; but by none else.

I am, my Lord, &c.

L E T T E R III.

My Lord,

In order to settle right notions on the present subject, it cannot be too carefully attended to, that, in *holy scripture*, sprinkling, pouring, and washing or bathing the body, are always *distinct* rites, never confounded, or substituted one for another. If therefore it shall appear, that the *baptism* of scripture is nothing more or less than *washing the body* ; not the hands, or feet, or face, or any other particular part ; much less *sprinkling*, which the scripture *never* considers as any washing at all, but a rite quite *distinct* from every kind of *lotion* ; if I say, *baptism* is *washing the body*, it will deserve and demand the *very serious consideration* of every one who is concerned to observe this as an *institution of God*, whether, and upon what principle, we may lay aside the *one only baptism* of scripture, and put *another thing* in the room

room of it. And further, with respect to the practice of *modern* times (for sprinkling is but of late date in *England*) it may deserve also to be considered, whether there ever was in any part of the Bible any such religious ceremony, as *sprinkling water* on the face? If my reading does not deceive me, there does not appear in all the five books of *Moses* any rite of sprinkling *mere* water. There was a sprinkling of water mixed with blood, and of water mixed with the ashes of an heifer; but I think no such thing as sprinkling *simple* water. It is said indeed, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25.* Then will I *sprinkle clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean; alluding, no doubt, to some watery purification in the law of *Moses*. But I have not been able to find any expositor, who could point out any ceremony of *unmixed* water, to which this refers. The only probable account I can find is, it refers to the *water of separation*, *Numb. xix.* called also *water*, *simply*; but this was really a *composition* of various ingredients, *viz.* the ashes of a burnt heifer, cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, all mixed with the water. And the unclean person was not only to be *sprinkled* with this *mixture*, two several days, but, moreover, there was *another* quite distinct rite to be performed, even a *baptism*, *verse 19.* And the clean person shall *sprinkle* [the water of separation] upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day. And on the seventh day he shall purify himself,

and

and wash his cloaths, and bathe himself in water. Twice sprinkled, my Lord, and after that once baptized.

Washing the hands was a religious ceremony of divine appointment; as also washing the feet. If then a clergyman should wash only the hands, or feet of the person to be baptized, and justify his practice by this text, John xiii. 10. *Jesus saith to him, he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.* I submit it to your Lordship's consideration, whether a minister has not as much [or more] scriptural authority to practise thus, and solemnly use the name of the *holy Trinity* on this occasion, and call it *baptism*, as he has to *sprinkle the face*, or, as the custom is in *Switzerland*, to pour water on the *back part of the head*,* and call it *baptism*. All men, I doubt not, would cry out against this clergyman, as a *corrupter* of the sacrament of baptism. But why? Not because it is further removed from the *scripture account* of baptism, [viz. a *washing the body with pure water*] than our present practice, but because it is not *customary*.

I now beg leave to lay before your Lordship those passages on *baptism*, whose *circumstances* assist in determining the *due manner* of this institution; and, if I introduce the remarks of learned men on some of these passages; I do

* Bishop Burnet's 2d Letter.

it, not as if by their authority, be they ever so learned or numerous, the point in question is to be decided ; but, on this principle, *viz.* that it may fairly be presumed, a judicious and learned writer will not, *against* his own practice, acknowledge more, than what he feels himself *constrained* to grant, by the overbearing force and evidence of truth.

Mat. iii. 5, 6. Then went out to him *Jerusalem*, and all *Judea*, and all the region round about *Jordan*, and were baptized of him in *JORDAN*.

Verse 16. And *Jesus* when he was baptized went up straightway *out of the water*.

Mark i. 5. Were all baptized of him *in the river of Jordan*.

Verse 9, 10. *Jesus* was baptized in *JORDAN* ; and straightway *coming up out of the water*.

John iii. 23. *John* was baptizing in *Enon*, because there was much water there.*

* In the Greek, *υδατα πολλα*, *many waters*, which some, either not knowing, or not attending to the Hebrew idiom, have fancied does not oblige us to understand of *much* or a *large quantity* of water. Whereas *υδατα πολλα* is only the Hebraism בְּכָרֶב כְּמָה. Now the singular number of this Hebrew substantive being not used, therefore the Greek version is sometimes *υδωρ water*, sometimes *υδατα waters*, tho' the Hebrew stands always the same. An example or two will suffice, instead of great numbers which might easily be produced. *Ezek. xxvi. 19.* When I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great *waters* [Greek *υδωρ πολυν*] shall cover thee. *Psalms lxxvii. 19.* Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great *waters*. [Greek *υδασι πολλοις*.] So that it is quite indifferent, whether you express *much water* by *υδωρ πολυν*, or *υδατα πολλα*. So the same river, in the same chapter, is *υδωρ*, *water*, and *υδατα*, *waters*, *John iii.*

Acts viii. 38, 39. They went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water.

Rom. vi. 4. Buried with him by baptism.

1 Cor. vi. 11. Ye are washed [ἀπελαύσασθε.] Note, λάυσις is the word constantly used [except once βαπτίζω] in those very numerous places of the Old Testament, where bathing the person is commanded, as a distinct rite from all others of sprinkling, pouring, &c.

Ephes. v. 26. That he might cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water. [τῷ λατρῷ.]

Coloss. ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him.

Heb. x. 22. Our bodies washed with pure water. [λελύμενοι.]

Every circumstance, of chusing a river to baptize in, of going down into the water, and coming up out of the water, both the baptizer and the baptized; and the allusions to a burial and rising again; and of singling out a place proper for baptism, for this only reason, because there was much water there: all these circumstances are quite proper and natural to the custom of immersion. But it is hard to account for the mentioning or pertinence of them upon any other interpretation of baptism.

According to the custom of our day, my Lord, a single basin of water will suffice for a great multitude. And if the institution may be satisfied this way, to what purpose were

the multitudes obliged to leave their cities and towns for the sake of coming at a river? What reason is there in chusing a place because there is much water, if much water were not necessary? There is not a town or village, but would equally well have served for the place of baptizing, according to modern custom.

The Greek church observes, on Jesus coming up out of the water of Jordan after his baptism, *Mat. iii. 16.* that "he who ascended out of the water must first descend down into it. Baptism therefore is to be performed, not by sprinkling but by washing the body." "And indeed, says Dr. Whitby in loc. it can only be from ignorance of the Jewish rites in baptism, that this is questioned; for they, to the due performance of this rite, so superstitiously required the immersion of the whole body, that if any dirt hindered the water from coming to any part of it, the baptism was not right; and if one held the baptized person by the arm when he was let down into the water, another must after dip him, holding him by the other arm that was washed before, because his hand would not suffer the water to come to his whole body."

Mr. Baxter, in his Paraphrase on the *New Testament*, [one of the last books he published in a good old age, when the heat of controversy may be supposed well over] observes on *Mat. iii. 6.* "We grant that baptism then was

" was by *washing the whole body*; and did not the
" differences of our *cold country*, as to that hot
" one teach us to remember [I will have mer-
" cy and not sacrifice] it should be so here."

The same writer thus paraphrases Rom. vi. 4.
" Therefore in our baptism we are *dipped under*
" *the water*, as signifying we are *dead and*
" *buried to sin.*" Again, Coloff. ii. 12. is thus
paraphrased by him, " They [your lusts] are
" dead and buried with him, for so your *bap-*
" *tism* signifieth, in which you are *put under*
" *the water*, to signify and profess that your
" old man is dead and buried, &c." Once
more, on I Peter iii. 21. " When we are
" raised to holiness by his Spirit, as we *rise out*
" *of the water in baptism*, &c."

But why, it may be asked, so particular
with Mr. Baxter? For the sake, my Lord,
of the *Pædobaptist dissenters*, if these letters
should fall into their hands, that they may
see the opinion [as to what was *scriptural*
baptism] of a man justly held in high esteem
amongst them. The excuse of him and ma-
ny others, for laying aside the *scripture bap-*
tism, *confessed* to be the *scripture baptism*, and
for substituting in the room of it *another rite*,
intirely another rite, shall be considered in the
next letter,

I am, my Lord, &c.

LETTER IV.

I Am afraid, your Lordship, by this time, begins to think me tedious. You do not want all this labour of proof, that the scripture baptism is immersion. You know it : you own it : you bear witness publicly, before all the world, that baptism as now performed amongst us, is NOT KNOWN in the New Testament, the repository of the *only authentic* declarations concerning this duty ; for “ if baptism had been THEN performed as it is NOW amongst us, we should never have so much as heard of this form of expression, of dying and arising again in this rite”.

My Lord, I presume not the attempt of informing you ; but beg you will allow me the favour to stand up before you, an equitable and most capable judge, as a pleader in support of a matter of TRUTH and RIGHT almost entirely cast out from our part of the world, that all in Court may hear and know the reasons I have humbly to propose why *the banished should return.*

I say, a matter of truth and right, almost intirely cast out from our part of the world. For, thanks be to God, in other parts there are still millions, amongst whom the New Testament rite, that is, the divine rite of immersion, is still preserved. The vast Russian empire

pire hold it fast, and *all other Churches*, who never submitted to the tyranny of the *Church of Rome*. But to return, I would desire any man, capable of the enquiry, to consider with meekness and candour these two Things : First, whether the *Greek* of the *New Testament*, is not borrowed from the *Septuagint*, the *Greek* of the *Old Testament* ? that being the *vulgar tongue* of the *Hellenistical Jews* ; and the scriptures being read in that language in all *their synagogues* ; for, as to the *Hebrew*, they did not understand it.*

If the case be so, then let it be considered, secondly, whether it was *possible* for the *New Testament* writers to chuse out from all the *Greek* of the *Old Testament* two words that can *more precisely*, and *determinate* [if *so determinately*] express and specify *that one particular ceremony* of washing the whole body, as distinct from *all other purifications* and washings, than the two words they have actually chosen, *viz.* βαπτιζω and λεω, to which add its compound απολεω ? It has been already observed, that βαπτω would scarce have done so well, it being not used in the *Septuagint* in any one place, I believe where the very frequent ceremony of *washing the whole body* occurs. But supposing baptism were expressed

* Note, That St. Paul, even to the *Hebrews*, quoted from the lxx. is proved in sundry examples by bishop Pearson in his learned preface to the *Septuagint*.

in scripture by βαπτω, a word which undoubtedly means *dipping*, if any word in the Greek tongue can mean it ; yet, my Lord, a man disposed rather to hide and shun truth than embrace it, might find ways and means to get shift even of this word ; thus he reads in *Dan.* iv. 33. That *Nebuchadnezzar* was driven from man, and did eat grafts as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven. He reads the same again, chap. v. ver. 21. But how is this in the Greek of those passages? It is thus: ατο της δροσες τις σπανε το σωμα αυτη εβαψε. [dip] Now we all know, that a person is wet with dew, not by *immersion* into it, but by its distillation in gentle drops, we are *sprinkled* by it. Hence, in scripture and common language, *drop as the dew*, and *drops of dew*. A clear proof, that βαπτω signifies to *sprinkle*. And thus, my Lord, there is no word, whose literal, strict and proper meaning may not be evaded, whenever an *allusive* and *metaphorical* sense can be found, which turns off from the literal signification. Its *literal* sense, even where there is no possible room for *figure*, may be thrown aside, and the *figurative* import brought in, whenever it is convenient to serve an *hypothefis*. And so I have known it actually fare with the offspring of βαπτω, viz. βαπτιζω, particularly in *1 Corinth.* x. 2. *And were all baptized into Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.* What every school-boy, capable of looking into his lexicon,

con, knows to be the strict *literal* meaning of the word, is set aside, where it occurs only in its *literal* import, by the help of a few circumstances in a mere *figure* and *allusion*; thus, the *cloud*, which hung over the children of *Israel*, is a watery substance, *sprinkling* its water in *drops*. The *sea*, which was *as a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left*; by the force of the strong wind which blew, sent forth a great spray or *sprinkling*. So they were plentifully *sprinkled* by the cloud above, and by the waters on each side. And thus we have proved, with equal calmness and strength of argument, that both $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\omega$ and $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$ literally imply *sprinkling*. Whereas a man of plain sense, not so *philosophical* as to think of this cloud or pillar of *fire*, dropping down *water*; but of opinion, with your Lordship, that the baptism of scripture is *immersion*, would be apt to carry his thoughts no further than to apprehend, here is an allusion to the custom of *immersion*; the *Israelites* being as it were *covered* by the cloud over, and the waters on each side of them. Or as *Grotius*, on the place, expresses it, “The cloud was “over their head: so also is the water over “the head of those who are baptized. The “sea encompassed their sides: so also does the “water compass those who are baptized.” “*Nubes impendebat illorum capiti: Sic & aqua iis qui baptizantur. Mare circumdabat eorum latera: Sic & aqua eos qui baptizantur.*” We who

who are so little used to washing the whole body, either in a common or religious way, are apt to wonder, where, and how, such prodigious numbers, as are mentioned in the *New Testament* to be baptized, could be accommodated if they were immersed in water? But, my Lord, it needs only to be considered, the principal scene of baptism lay in a country, where *immersion* was quite familiar, and must, by the very laws of their religion, come into daily use through all parts of the land; and then the wonder will cease. For, as bishop *Patrick* observes, "there are so many washings prescribed [in the law of *Moses*] that it is reasonable to believe, there were not only at *Jerusalem*, and in all other cities, but in every village several bathing places contrived for these legal purifications, that men might, without much labour, be capable to fulfil their precepts." *Comment on Lev. xv. 12.*

I come now, my Lord, to what was promised in the last letter, viz. to consider the excuse of those, who, though they confess the scriptural baptism to be *immersion*, yet apologize for a departure from it; and, of two quite different distinct laws and institutions, put one in the room of the other. In consequence thereof, it is come to that pass, that what at first was done but seldom, and in supposed cases of urgent necessity, is now become the universal, constant practice; and the *one* baptism, the acknowledged *one* baptism

tism of scripture is *intirely cast out*, in favour of ANOTHER RITE ; except among a handful of people, who still preserve the primitive form.

Mr. Baxter, we have already seen, excuses the matter by the *coldness* of our climate. *Calvin*, the celebrated reformer at *Geneva*, observes, in his exposition of *Act*s viii. 38. “ We see here what was the baptismal rite among the ancients ; for they plunged the whole body in the water. Now 'tis the custom for the minister to *sprinkle* only the body or head.” And he too excuses this *sprinkling* ; but how I cannot well recollect, having not his book at hand. Bishop *Burnet*, though he thus describes the primitive baptism, “ With no other garments but what might serve to cover nature ; they at first laid them down in the water, as a man is laid in a grave, and then they said these words, “ *I baptize, or wash thee, in the name, &c.* Then they raised them up again, and clean garments were put on them : from whence came the phrases of being *baptized into Christ's death*, of being *buried with him by baptism into death*: of our being *risen with Christ*, and of our putting on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, of putting off the old man, and putting on the new.” And though he justly observes, “ sacraments are positive precepts, which are to be measured only by the institution, in which there is not room left for us to carry them any further ;” yet, forgetting his own measure of

the institution, viz. the party baptized was laid down in the water, as a man is laid in the grave. " He says, the danger of dipping in cold climates may be a very good reason for changing the form of baptism to sprinkling." *Expos. xxxix Articles*, pages 226, 300, 346, *Edit. I.* But, as the good Bishop observes, in the page last cited, on the other sacrament, and the change made therein by the church of Rome. " All reasoning upon this head is an arguing against the institution ; as if Christ and his apostles had not well considered it ; but that 1200 years after them, a consequence should be observed, that till then had not been thought of, which made it reasonable to alter the manner of it. He who instituted it knew best, what was most fitting and most reasonable ; and we must choose rather to acquiesce in his commands, than in our own reasonings." Page 347.

It is evident to your Lordship, that when our blessed Saviour said unto the apostles, Go, teach all nations, baptizing them, they understood him to mean dipping. Here then is one only rule and law for all nations. No provision for making a difference between warm climates and cold. Not the least hint of two rites, of which the administrator may take his choice, according to his own prudence and discretion ; but there is one law, one institution, for all nations upon the face of the earth ; Go, teach and dip them. Why then, my Lord, do we not acquiesce

acquiesce in this command, but change it by our own reasoning?

But I beg leave to say two or three things in particular to the plea for this *confessed alteration*.

First, Coldness of climate is an excuse which, make the best of it, can serve but for some part of the year, and for some weakly constitutions; and yet the practice of *sprinkling* is universal and constant, in the hot season as well as cold, and on the most robust and healthy as well as the weak. The reason offered in justification of the new way implies, that were it not for *necessity*, the *primitive baptism* should be kept to; nevertheless, it is not observed, where no shadow of necessity is pretended. Such commonly is the end and effect of departing from our rule: Human nature falls in with what is least troublesome. We first plead a necessity of relaxing in certain cases; these cases continually multiply in favour of *ease* and *indulgence*, and then *custom* carries all before it. Dr. *Wall*, giving the reasons why in queen *Elizabeth's* reign the custom of *dipping* was laid aside, observes, " It being allowed to " weak children to be baptized by *affusion*, ma- " ny fond ladies and gentlewomen first, and " then by degrees the common people, would " obtain the favour of the priest to have their " children pass for weak children, too tender " to endure *dipping* in the water." Vol. 2. page 301. Edit. 1.

Secondly, *Immersion* was the constant prac-

tice in this same cold climate for many hundred years (the change into *sprinkling*, as a general practice, being scarce two hundred years old) and yet I believe no history can be produced of its having been of ill consequence even to infants. Take the affair only in a *medical view*, and cold bathing is not only *safe*, but very *useful*, many times, to tender babes, which made the late Dr. Cheyne say, "I cannot sufficiently
 " admire how it [cold bathing] should ever
 " have come into such disuse, especially a-
 " mong Christians, when commanded by the
 " greatest lawgiver that ever was, under the
 " direction of God's holy Spirit, to his chosen
 " people, and *perpetuated to us in the immer-*
" sion at baptism by the same Spirit, who,
 " with infinite wisdom, in this, as in every thing
 " else, that regards the temporal and eternal
 " felicity of his creatures, combines their *duty*
 " with their *happiness*," *Essay on Health, &c.*

Chap. 4. Sect. 7.

Thirdly, The rule [God will have mercy and not sacrifice] may justly be applied to excuse from *baptism itself*, [that is, as I understand it, from *immersion*] those who cannot receive it without manifest *danger*; but, I think, will by no means justify a change of *baptism* into another quite different rite. For illustration sake, my Lord, I beg leave to mention the case of an old testament rite, *circumcision*. It was a divine appointment, that this rite should be observed with respect to every

Jewish

Jewish male at eight days old. Yet during the Israelites travel through the wilderness, for the space of forty years, it was omitted. The reason of which was the danger and great inconvenience that must arise from it, in their travelling unsettled condition. *Vide Patrick* and other expositors on *Joshua v.* But suppose the Jews, from the undoubted inconvenience of circumcising the part appointed, had reasoned themselves into the practice of circumcising a finger or toe, would not this have been an unwarrantable departure from the institution of God? Unquestionably it would. Who required this at their hand? And especially would they not be chargeable with a notorious perversion of a plain positive precept, if, from this plea of necessity in the wilderness, they should take occasion to make the change total and perpetual, upon all persons, and in all times? And how long soever this alteration had prevailed, would it not be justifiable, and matter of commendation, nay even duty, in those persons who saw the deviation from the declared will of the Institutor, to reject this circumcision of *human device*, and restore it to its first institution? We must think so, unless the antiquity of error excuse it, and make that right, which at first was wrong. If therefore baptism was originally immersion, let it be immersion still; for, as your most learned friend Dr. S. Clarke has observed, "In things of external appointment, and mere positive institution,

" institution, where we cannot, as in matters
 " of natural and moral duty, argue concerning
 " the natural reason and ground of the obli-
 " gation, and the original necessity of the thing
 " itself; we have nothing to do but to obey the
 " positive command. God is infinitely better
 " able than we, to judge of the propriety and
 " usefulness of the things he institutes; and it
 " becomes us to obey with humility and rever-
 " ence." *Expos. Church Cat.*, page 305, &c.

Edit. 2. See below, *Set 30*, *Explanatory*.

Your lordship will suffer me to add, there is
 not so great a difference between circumcising a
 finger and the foreskin, as between covering the
 whole body in water, and sprinkling the face.
 It would be circumcision still, only of a differ-
 ent part; but bathing and sprinkling, the book
 of God always considers as two institutions quite
 distinct.

In what has been advanced in these Letters,
 your Lordship knows, I have been pleading for
 a return of the ancient primitive baptism of
 the church. I am sorry that fonts of modern
 structure are so dwindled in size, that an infant
 cannot be dipt in them; and shall be very glad
 if we are recovered to so just a sense of the
 divine authority in this institution, as to con-
 clude we have nothing to do but observe the posi-
 tive command, and with humility and reverence
 obey the original institution, that is, to dip the
 party baptized in the name, &c.

For if your Lordship's observation is right,
 that

that "the due manner of performing this positive duty depends entirely upon the will and declaration of him who institutes or ordains it ;" and no manner is declared by him, but that *immersion*, which, you say, was the custom in the *first* and *only authentic days*; your Lordship then instructs me to conclude, that to follow any *direction*, which turns us off from this *immersion*, is, so far, making it *our own institution*, and not the institution of *him* who first appointed it.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient bumble servant.

P. S. The author designs (God willing) a second course of Letters, concerning the *nature* and *end* of christian baptism, built on the same foundation, which your lordship, as a wise master-builder, has laid, *viz.* "The *only authentic declarations of the New Testament.*"

F I N I S.

that the only manner of proceeding this day
is to make daily debates contrary upon the Bill
and a declination of him who institutes or or-
ders it; which is declared by him
but this manner, which you say was the
custom in the first days of our ancestors; your
providence then joins to concord, these
of whom you have given me no other
such instrument as it can be done
and that he doth not his judgment
in his opinion in



I am the Law

John. Tengnagel

John. Tengnagel

P. S. The author hereunto (God willing) is to
have count of the publick concurrence of the members
and any of criticism, publishing, print or otherwise,
as some opposition, which may hinder his
a wise writer-publisher, publish, etc. "The
only sufficient method of the War

" Tengnagel "

